

# Leigh NIXON PRESIDENT 2010 2011



Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise

## The Simi Sunriser

July 1, 2010



### Coloring Outside the Lines

Leigh Nixon, President

"Coloring Outside the Lines" is my motto for the 2010/2011 Rotary year. What this means is that we can always take a new approach to the way we do things and it never has to be "that's the way we have always done it!" Let's get creative and color all over the place! As I was in Montreal, Canada last week for the RI Convention, I observed so much color, in programs, people, language, entertainment and the wonderful city we were in!

The Rotary Convention reminded us constantly about our purpose, our mission, service, the four way test and all the good we do locally and in the world. No one colors inside the lines when it comes to The Rotary Foundation; what it accomplishes world wide and how important our contributions are to continue the work of Rotary, the International partnerships we have made, the matching grants, and the relationships that are established when working toward a goal of

#### Club Service



Cindy Jacoby

#### Community Service



Steve Johnson



Arvid Krueger

#### Vocational Service



Mike Alterman

#### New Generations



Jarrod DeGonia

#### Family of Rotary



Monica Berlin



Savi Bhim

#### International Service



Maggie Kestley



Scott Blough

#### Foundation



Heather Frankie



Pat Abuzzesse

#### Water Concerns



Tom Marsh

#### Sergeant At Arms



Rob Whalen

2010 - 2011

#### Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise Officers



President  
Leigh Nixon



Secretary  
Ernie Gilbert



Treasurer  
Mike McCaffrey



Past President  
Tim Shannon



President-Elect  
Herschel Berger

#### New leadership at Rotary Sunrise

The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise has announced the 2010-2011 officers and directors.

The officers are: president, Leigh Nixon; secretary, Ernie Gilbert; treasurer, Mike McCaffrey; past president, Tim Shannon; president elect, Herschel Berger; sergeant at arms, Rob Whalen;

club service, Cindy Jacoby; community service, Steve Johnson and Arvid Krueger; vocational service, Mike Alterman; new generations, Jarrod DeGonia; family of Rotary, Monica Berlin and Savi Bhim; international service, Maggie Kestley and Scott Blough; foundation, Heather Frankie and Pat Abuzzesse; st-large directors, B.J. Anderson, Craig Foster and Gary Stewart; Cajun chair, Bill Klepper; health concerns, Michelle Foster; and water concerns, Tom Marsh.

The club meets weekly for fellowship, breakfast and a presentation from a guest speaker at 7 a.m. Thursdays at the Grand Vista Hotel in Simi Valley.

Club membership consists of business and civic leaders who support local and international causes. For club information, visit [www.rotaryclubofsimisunrise.com](http://www.rotaryclubofsimisunrise.com).

#### At Large



Gary Stewart



Craig Foster



B.J. Anderson

#### Cajun Chair



Bill Klepper

#### Health Concerns



Michelle Foster



## Simi Valley leaders arrested - must raise funds for Education Foundation

Several Simi Valley leaders were hand-cuffed and served "warrants" by volunteering Simi Valley Police Department officers in a surprise "sting" at a Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise meeting on Sept. 16.

The suspects — local elected officials, business owners, community leaders and a high school principal — were shortly afterward released on their own recognizance. They now must return to a makeshift jail for a special event on Oct. 6 at Larsen's Grill at Simi Valley Town Center to conclude the Simi Valley Education Foundation's new Jail & Bail fund-raiser.

From the time of their arrest to their return to their cells, the suspects must raise a specified amount of bail — all of which will go to the nonprofit Education Foundation to help local schools and students.

Served "warrants" Sept. 16 by Simi Valley Police Chief Mike Lewis were Dan White, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Leigh Nixon; Rotary Club member Pat Abuzzese; Simi Valley High School Principal Steve Pietrolungo; Education Foundation President Brian Iverson; City Councilman Steve Sojka; City Councilwoman Michelle Foster; and Rotary Club member Scott Blough.

For a list of every suspect with a warrant out for their arrest in the Jail & Bail program, visit <http://svedf.org/jail/index.html>.

Local residents and businesses are encouraged to get involved to help bail out these local leaders and help local schools and students in the process. Stop by Larsen's Grill on Oct. 6 to participate and join in the fun.

The police officers involved with the sting Sept. 16 were volunteer off-duty officers assisting in the fund-raising effort.

The Simi Valley Education Foundation is a state-registered nonprofit organization with a mission of bringing together community and civic entities toward providing additional resources to students in Simi Valley's public schools through student scholarships, classroom and department/grade-level grants, and providing resources for our youth.

## Mock arrests made in the name of education



**BOOK 'EM**—Rotary Club members Pat Abuzzese, left, and Steve Pietrolungo, right, principal of Simi Valley High School, are cuffed by SVPD Officer Richie Law at a Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise meeting. The stunt, which occurred on Sept. 16 at the Grand Vista Hotel, initiated the Jail & Bail fundraising program for the Simi Valley Education Foundation. Local officials, business owners and community leaders were "arrested" and given the window of time between their "arrest" until their return to their cells at an event on Oct. 6, to raise a specified amount of bail—all of which will benefit Simi Valley's schools.

## Cajun Allocations: Making A Difference In Our Community

This morning we distributed allocations from our 2010 Cajun festival. Over the years we have distribute more than \$1.2 million from our Cajun proceeds. Below is the list of those organizations that received money this year. Each representative shared with us how the money would be spent within their organization.

Boy Scout Troop 622	Simi Valley Education Foundation
Boys & Girls Club of Simi Valley	Simi Valley Family YMCA
Care & Share Food Bank	Simi Valley High Football Booster Club
For The Troops	Simi Valley High School Music Boosters
Free Clinic of Simi Valley	Simi Valley Police Explorers Post #2910
Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast	Simi Valley Police Reserves
Loving Heart Hospice Foundation	St. Augustine Creole Historical Society
Many Mansions	SVHF - Child Development Center
Michael Hoefflin Foundation for Children's Cancer	SVHF - Nancy Reagan Breast Center
	The Samaritan Center - Simi Valley
	The Wellness Community Valley

## Australian Visitors Get a Look at a Day in the Life of Simi Valley Hospital

They came from the land down under — five special guests who toured Simi Valley Hospital on Oct. 5 as part of a worldwide educational program sponsored by the Rotary Foundation.

The group, made up of four young businesspeople and a Rotary Club team leader, traveled from Melbourne, Australia, for a four-week visit throughout Rotary District 5240, which covers Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Kern counties. Their visit was arranged through the Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange program.

Michelle Foster, Simi Valley Hospital's director of marketing and communication and a member of the Simi Sunrise Rotary Club, offered to host the visitors for a tour of Simi Valley Hospital during their 2 1/2 days in the Simi Valley area.

"The purpose of the GSE program is to promote goodwill and understanding among people around the world, and we were excited to be a part of that for our guests from Australia," Foster said.

The group met in the Sycamore Café for breakfast then toured the main hospital building, including the Patient Care Tower's med/surg unit, women's unit and birthing center, NICU, main lobby and chapel, as well as the hospital's emergency department.

"They were very impressed by the new building, how well it was planned and how spacious and comfortable the rooms were," said Karen Stewart, a member of the Simi Sunset Rotary Club and the coordinator of the team's visit to the Simi Valley/Moorpark area. "They were saying things like, 'I'd stay here. This is like a hotel!'"

In addition to Simi Valley Hospital, the group and various members visited the Simi Valley city manager's office to learn about emergency services procedures; highway patrol, police and fire headquarters; Calleguas Municipal Water District; and a couple of local ranches. The group also enjoyed a pleasure trip to the Ronald Reagan Library and Museum.

The GSE program is a cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for businesspeople and professionals between the ages of 25 and 40. An interesting

aspect of the program is that it is open specifically to non-Rotarians as a way to introduce people to the organization and its worldwide reach.

The host district of a GSE program reciprocates with a trip to its partner's district. A group of three to five people from within the counties of district 5240 will travel to Melbourne in spring 2011.

Stewart said applications are now being taken from men and women between the ages of 25 and 40 for that trip. The application deadline is Nov. 10. For more information, contact Karen Stewart at 857-0367 or visit <http://www.rotarydistrict5240.org>.

## Simi Valley Organizations Receive Grants from Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise

Every year, the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise awards money to worthy organizations in Simi Valley. The money is raised from the Cajun & Blues Music Festival, now in its 22nd year. Festival profits are donated in support of charitable, educational and humanitarian causes. Over the years, thanks to the generous and vital support of corporate partners, profits from The Cajun & Blues Music Festival have resulted in total charitable donations in excess of \$1.2 million.

Each year, the Allocations Committee, comprised of club members, accepts and evaluates applications for grants from nonprofit organizations that work to improve quality of life within Simi Valley. The committee ensures that the funds awarded are used to the best advantage of the community and in keeping with Rotary principles and/or other Simi Sunrise Club programs.

At a recent club meeting, Allocation's Chair Doug Feco announced and awarded grants to the following local organizations. Representatives from the groups below briefly spoke to the club to talk about how the money will be utilized by their particular nonprofit.

Boy Scout Troop 622	National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Boys & Girls Club of Simi Valley	Sarah's House
Care & Share Food Bank	Simi Sunrise Rotary Charitable Foundation
For The Troops	Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation
Free Clinic of Simi Valley	Simi Valley Education Foundation
Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast	Simi Valley Family YMCA
Loving Heart Hospice Foundation	Simi Valley High Football Booster Club
Many Mansions	Simi Valley High School Music Boosters
Michael Hoefflin Foundation for Children's Cancer	Simi Valley Police Explorers Post #2910

Simi Valley Police Reserves
St. Augustine Creole Historical Society
Simi Valley Hospital Foundation - Child Development Center
Simi Valley Hospital Foundation - Nancy Reagan Breast Center
The Samaritan Center - Simi Valley
The Wellness Community Valley Ventura
Ventura County Council, Boy Scouts of America
Willie Ross Foundation
Women of Substance & Men of Honor, Inc.





# City of Simi Valley Proclamation



*Whereas, Polio eradication has been Rotary International's top priority since 1985, with more than \$1.2 billion contributed to the effort; and*

*Whereas, when Rotary began its mission to eradicate polio, more than 350,000 children were stricken with polio every year and nearly 1,000 were affected by this crippling disease every day; and*

*Whereas, through the efforts of Rotary and its partners, polio cases have been reduced by 99 percent to fewer than 1,700 cases in 2009, and the world is on the threshold of eradicating polio forever; and*

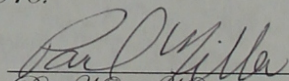
*Whereas, the three Rotary Clubs in Simi Valley have joined in the initiative to raise positive awareness and educate the citizens of Simi Valley about the vital importance of eradicating Polio worldwide.*

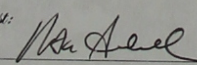
*Now, Therefore, October 24, 2010 is hereby proclaimed*

## *"Rotary World Polio Day"*

*in the City of Simi Valley to encourage the citizens of Simi Valley to support Rotary's goal of making this a polio-free world.*

*Presented this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 2010.*

  
Paul Miller, Mayor

*Attest:*   
Mike Sedell, City Clerk





**The Actors' Repertory Theatre of Simi Gazette**  
 Saturday, October 30, 2010

**Extra! Extra! Beloved musical opens at Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center!**

You could always wait until "Tomorrow", but "Maybe" you'd like to take a break from your "Hard Knock Life" and drive down "Easy Street" to see....

# Annie



Family of Rotary had a joint theater evening with the 3 Simi Valley Rotary clubs. We saw Annie at the Cultural Arts center, with a private Happy Hour before. Nice evening!



## Thanksgiving Dinner at the Senior Center



## Target Shopping Day



## Thanksgiving Eve Dinner

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

Great company, great food  
 Join us for a delicious turkey dinner with all the fixin's

Simi Valley Senior Center  
 3900 Avenida Simi  
 (805) 583-6363

Dinner seatings are at 5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Pick up Your Free Tickets at the Reception Desk  
 A limited amount of tickets are available starting November 1

**TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE!**  
 Call Dial-A-Ride by November 19th  
 (805) 583-6464

Sponsored by Simi Valley Council On Aging and the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise



# 2010 Holiday Children's Bike Assembly Party



## Rotary volunteers assemble holiday bikes for kids

By Kris Solley

Originally published 06:05 p.m. | December 16, 2010  
Updated 06:59 p.m. | December 16, 2010

On Wednesday evening, as holiday shoppers crowded into malls and big box stores, 150 volunteers gathered in a cold warehouse in Simi Valley. They came to help the area's three Rotary Clubs — Simi Sunrise, Simi Valley Noon and Simi Sunset — assemble 240 bicycles as part of the clubs' annual tradition of providing bikes and helmets to children who otherwise may not get a new bicycle.

Jim Tokatlian, chairman of the Rotary Club's annual build-a-bike giveaway, said, "It's a wonderful idea, a wonderful community event and a wonderful way to make someone happy. The Rotary Club motto is service above self and this event serves the entire community. It's Rotary at its best."

The build-a-bike giveaway began in 2000 when then President Steve Smith of Simi Sunrise Rotary Club shared his idea for providing bicycles to children with Rick McClure, owner of Simi Bike Works, a local bicycle store.

McClure's professional connections made it possible for Smith to purchase 50 bicycles at cost, which 30 Rotarian volunteers helped assemble. "We've come a long way in 10 years," said Smith, as he looked over the teams of volunteers busy building 240 bikes Wednesday.

The three Rotary clubs take portions of proceeds from fundraising events earlier in the year to pay for the bikes and helmets. Rotary Simi Sunrise Club holds a Cajun Festival every Memorial Day weekend at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, Rotary Simi Valley Noon Club puts on a Fourth of July fireworks show and the Rotary Simi Sunset Club organizes the 5K and 10K Gator Run each April.

Deepa Willingham, Rotary Club district governor, came from Solvang to lend a hand at the event.

"The process starts in August," she said. "The Rotary clubs contact nonprofits and churches in the area and asks them to select a number of children they believe deserve these bikes. Children who never thought they'd be receiving a new bike are getting their Christmas wishes fulfilled."

And those nonprofits and churches pitch in to help assemble the bikes.

"With the economy the way it is, these bikes are a big blessing for members of our congregation," said Claudio Camillo, youth director at Simi's Church of God, one of the many organizations that help the Rotary Club distribute bicycles. "These bicycles will be putting big smiles on children's faces this holiday."

# Holiday Party

## MENU

### Dinner Choices:

1. Tri Tip Steak served with Coleslaw and Au Gratin Potatoes.
2. Southern Fried Chicken Tenders. Chicken breasts marinated in buttermilk tossed in southern herb breading served with green beans.
3. South Pacific White Fish, panko herb crusted then broiled to perfection and served with rice and vegetables.
4. Cobb Salad, chicken, bleu cheese, crispy bacon, corn, tomato, cucumber, toasted sunflower seeds with ranch dressing all resting atop romaine hearts.

### Dessert:

Slider Ice Cream Sandwich  
Choice of Coffee, Tea, Soda.

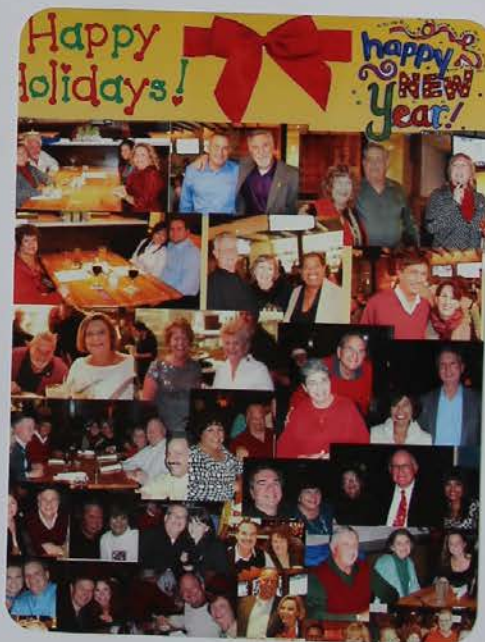
**\$25.00 per person**  
This will be up to you

Steve Reder's  
Sliders Bar and Grill

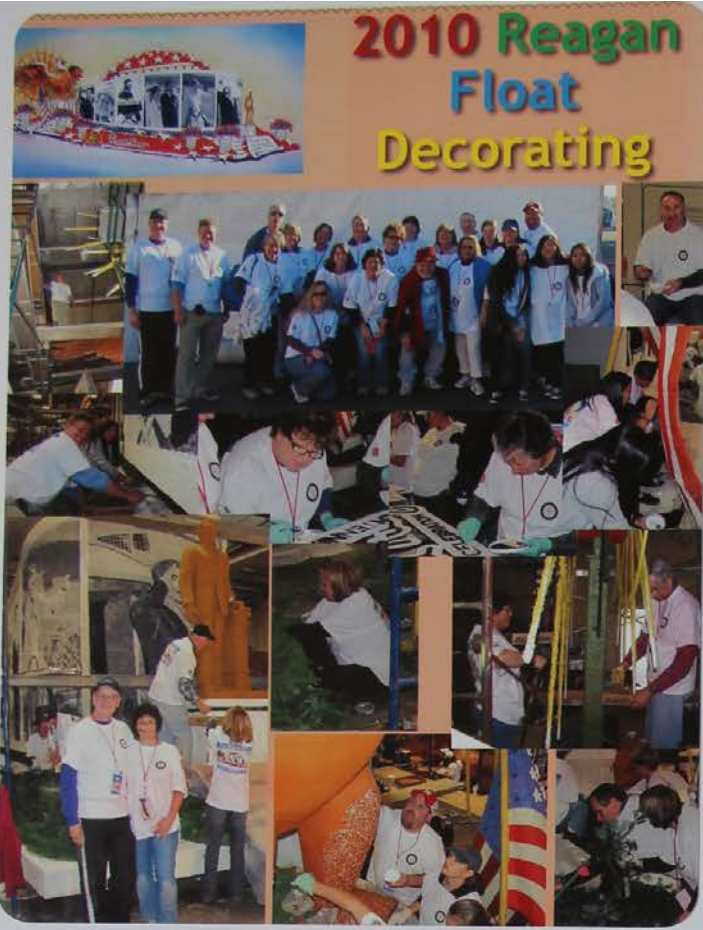


December 18th at 6pm  
1555 Simi Valley Town Center Way  
Contact: savvybhim@aol.com

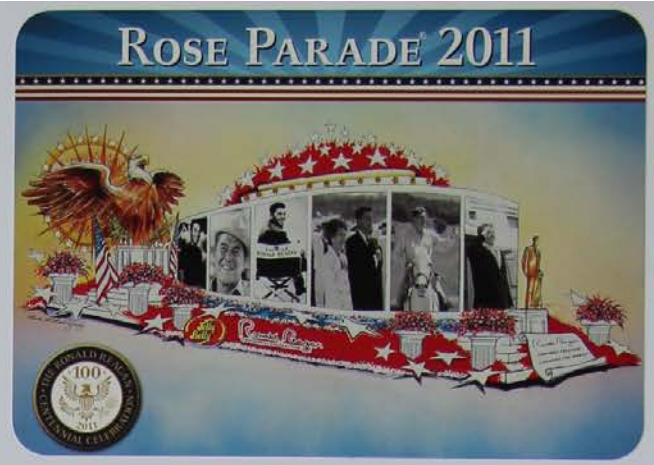
The 2010 Holiday Party was held at Steve Reder's new restaurant "Sliders!!" It was pouring rain that night, but we all had a great time anyway!







## 2010 Reagan Float Decorating



## ROSE PARADE 2011

### Rotary party kick-starts Cajun fest

A kickoff party for the 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun and Blues Music Festival will take place at the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise meeting at 7 a.m. Thurs., Feb. 24 in the Grand Vista Hotel, 999 Enchanted Way, Simi Valley. Award-winning blues singer Mitch Kashmar will perform. The party will also have Cajun food and prizes.

The festival that will take place Memorial Day weekend has raised more than \$1.1 million for local and international charities. The fest will feature continuous music on two stages, a kids' area, food booths and vendors.



## Rise 'n' shine to blues beat

■ Breakfast sets tone for Rotary festival

By Kris Sofley  
Special to The Star

Mardi Gras arrived early in Simi Valley as members of the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise gathered Thursday over breakfast for a live music performance from blues harp legend Mitch Kashmar and guitarist Alastair Greene.

The event kicked off the official countdown to the club's 22nd Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Music Festival, which takes place Memorial Day weekend, May 28 and 29, at the Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, 5005 Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley.

While 7 a.m. is an early set time for any musician, Kashmar, one of the blues acts performing this year, delivered a tasty sample of what's in store for festival-goers. "When you're on the road as much as I am, the clock becomes irrelevant," he said.

Rotarian Bill Klepper, festival chairman, announced several new elements to the festival in hopes of appealing to a wider audience. High among his priorities are the full integration of blues music into the festival; raising more money for the more than 50 local community, youth and senior organizations that the club helps support throughout the year; and the inclusion of a special Memorial Day recognition of military servicemen and women.

To that end, Klepper has invited Capt. James McHugh, commander of Naval Base Ventura County, to speak during



Dennis Barbee addresses the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise at the breakfast for the 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Music Festival.



Ernie Gilbert, a member of the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise, laughs at jokes at the kickoff breakfast Thursday for the music festival, which will be held Memorial Day weekend. Headlining the 2011 festival will be Buckwheat Zydeco the 2010 Grammy winner for Best Cajun and Zydeco Album.

“Blues music is a great American tradition; it is the root of all American music.”

Rand Chortkoff, Delta Groove Records, CEO

### Cajun fest books Grammy winner Buckwheat Zydeco

Festival returns May 28-29

The Simi Valley Cajun and Blues Music Festival has signed 2010 Grammy winner Buckwheat Zydeco to play both days at the festival, May 28 and 29 at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, 5005 Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley.

Buckwheat Zydeco won the Grammy for Best Cajun and Zydeco album for "Lay Your Burden Down."

The band was formed in 1979 by Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural Jr. They have performed for presidential inaugurations, with the Boston Pops and at London's Royal Albert Hall, where they shared the stage with Eric Clapton.

Buckwheat Zydeco has also performed and recorded with Keith Richards, Robert Plant, Willie Nelson, Mavis Staples,

David Hidalgo, Dwight Yoakam, Paul Simon and Ry Cooder. Their music has been featured on a dozen major motion pictures, and they won an Emmy for their music in "Pistol Pete: The Life And Times of Pete Maravich."

The festival will have two stages with dance floors providing nine hours of continuous musical performances. One stage will feature Cajun and zydeco music, with the second stage featuring the Delta Groove All-Star Blues Revue on Saturday and world class blues and roots acts on Sunday.

The festival is produced by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise with all proceeds going to charity.

For tickets, go to the festival box office or [www.cajun-blues.com](http://www.cajun-blues.com). Fees apply online.

See FESTIVAL, 28





Heen and John Van Horst mouth along behind the glass as their 6-year-old daughter, Kristina, auditions for the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival talent show. The tryouts were held at Platinum Gymnastics in Simi Valley on Sunday. PHOTO BY KATHA BROWN FOR THE STAR

## CAJUN & BLUES FESTIVAL AUDITIONS

# KIDS GOT TALENT

By Robyn Flans

Special to The Star

Six-year-old Kristina Van Horst of Simi Valley, who has been taking opera lessons for a year, is vying to be a finalist in the Battle of the Bands and Talent Show at the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival.

Opera may seem unusual for a 6-year-old, but Kristina's father said they discovered her talent about a year ago.

"She started walking around the backyard singing in an operatic voice, not with a child's voice," John Van Horst said.

"Last year, there was a talent show at her school and she came to us and said, 'I want to do the talent show.'"

She sang "Somewhere

Over the Rainbow" a cappella for 200 people.

"It's fun to sing opera," Kristina said. "I want to be an opera singer when I grow up."

Dorina Timbol, chairwoman of the Simi Valley Rotary Club and organizer of the children's events for the festival, held auditions Sunday for the talent show at Platinum Gymnastics.

"Even though it's called the Cajun & Blues Festival, Timbol has opened the kids' stage to all genres of music and talents."

"We are working on making the Cajun & Blues Festival a family event," she said. "We get a huge draw from lots of people from out of the area, but our goal is to promote local show."

See CAJUN, 3B



Brooke Blau (left) and her twin sister, Vivien, 11, get a critique of their performance from Steven Timbol, 17, and his mother, Dorina Timbol.

## Festival to be singing the blues

### It's official: Cajun music has a partner

By Rachel McGrath  
Special to The Star

Simi Valley's annual festival of Cajun music is officially welcoming the blues this year.

The Memorial Day weekend festival, which is one of Ventura County's largest live music events, is now the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival.

"We've had blues bands for a few years, but this is the first year we have incorporated it into the name," said William Kep-

pler, the festival chairman.

The festival, which Keppler said started out as a jambalaya 22 years ago, now attracts people from across California and beyond.

"They come from San Diego and from San Francisco, and quite a few from out of state. It's a well-organized event, and it just gets bigger every year. It really comes down to the bands we supply," Keppler said.

Organizers expect 15,000 to 20,000 people to attend the festival, which runs Saturday and Sunday at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, 5005 Los Angeles Ave.

One of the top headlining acts is Buckwheat Zydeco, who won the 2010

Grammy for Best Cajun and Zydeco Album for "Lay Your Burden Down."

Other performers include blues and rock guitarist Elvin Bishop and vocalist Maria Muldaur, best known for her 1974 hit "Midnight at the Oasis."

The festival will showcase performers on two stages, one for Cajun and zydeco and one for blues. Both stages will have large dance floors.

To help festival-goers get the most from their experience, a number of instructors will be on hand both days, led by Greg Benusa, a zydeco dance

See FESTIVAL, 3B

### FESTIVAL from 1B

teacher for 15 years, to offer group lessons on how to shake your booty in the right way.

"It really is an easy dance to learn as noted by how rare it is to find dance lessons in Louisiana and Texas where its roots are. Locals just pick it up visually by watching it at their many events they have every week," Benusa said in an email.

"It's a wonderful feeling as all the dancers are rising and falling with their weight changes to the additive syncopated rhythms of Cajun and zydeco music."

Adding to the atmosphere will be vendors offering Cajun and Creole food including crawfish, jambalaya and alligator.

"Where else can you get gator on a stick?" joked Keppler.

There also will be more traditional fare available from about two dozen food vendors as well as about 100 craft and merchandise vendors.

Organizers stress that the festival is a family-friendly event with a large children's entertainment area featuring bouncers, rock walls, arts and crafts, and talent shows.

On Friday, special-needs kids from the Simi Valley Unified School District will be able to meet the four Budweiser Clydesdales booked by the festival.

Since it started, the festival has raised about \$1.5 million for charitable causes supported by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise.

"This event funds all

the work we do all year," Keppler said. "We donate to more than 50 charities, host a Thanksgiving dinner for seniors and host a Christmas shopping spree at Target for underprivileged children."

The club's 130 members rely on the support of volunteers from other service organizations and community groups to help put on the event.

Tickets for the festival, which runs from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, are \$18 per day for adults (13 and over) and \$15 for children ages 5 to 12. Kids under 5 are admitted free.

Simi Valley residents are eligible for a \$3 discount for the event.

For more details, including information on free parking, go to <http://www.cajun-blues.com>.

## Bridging the Leadership Gap with Rotary International

May, 30 2011 - 2:28 pm | 287 views | 0 recommendations | 0 comments

Posted by Victoria Pynchon



President of the Simi Valley Sunrise Rotary Club Leigh Nixon

On Memorial Day we are all small town America, honoring the sacrifices of our war dead and wounded while celebrating the simple freedoms of the first long hot summer weekend.

In Simi Valley, California, Main Street – represented by the Simi Sunrise Rotary Club – honors our veterans and serves our global community by hosting a Cajun and Blues Music Festival to benefit service projects and charitable organizations worldwide.

This year, 18,000 people came to hear the music, eat jambalaya, and watch the Budweiser Clydesdales wind their way through booths selling succulents, tie-dyed t-shirts and Avon products. Dozens of brave ordinary citizens even learned to line dance.

Courtesy of a local public radio station – KJazz – I lounged in the VIP tent doing what small business people do even while tapping their feet to the music and eating too much fried food.

Networking

In my case, that meant learning a lot about the work of an organization I remember from my childhood only by its spaghetti dinners – Rotary International.

Women and Rotary

Ten years after Rotary International revoked the charter of a California Rotary Club for admitting three women to its membership, the United States Supreme Court noted that Rotary's stated purpose

is to produce an inclusive, not exclusive, membership, making possible the recognition of all useful local occupations, and enabling the club to be a true cross-section of the business and professional life of the community.

That an organization meant to represent a "true cross-section of the business and professional life of the community" deliberately excluded women as late as the Court's 1987 opinion, should have been shocking at the time. As the Supreme Court stressed in holding women's exclusion to be unconstitutional, as of 1980, women made up 40.6 percent of the managerial and professional labor force in the United States.

Yesterday's Problem

The problems of the past only look easier to resolve than today's challenges do because we're used to the solution. Those of us who were in business and the professions at the time, however, well remember the stridency of the rhetoric on both sides of the "private club" issue.

The men (mostly) insisted on their right to smoke cigars and talk trash out of the presence of women (and minorities!). The women (mostly) protested that they were unjustly excluded from opportunities to network with clients, much of which was done in the cozy confines of clubs. Here in Los Angeles, that meant the tony Jonathan (integrated in '89 but still holding on to its "men's only" dining room in 2001) and the exclusive California (integrated '88) Clubs.

Today's Problem

More than a quarter century after we battled our way through the Courts into these last bastions of male privilege, the percentage of women who participate remain shockingly low, particularly in light of the fact that women own forty percent of all businesses in the United States. More important to our nation's economic recovery, the growth rate for women-owned businesses between 1997 and 2002 was four times that of all businesses overall.

New jobs come from new businesses. And new businesses thrive on networking. But women's participation in small business and professional organizations like the Rotary is only twenty-two percent of the total here in the United States.

When I asked Simi Sunrise Rotary President Leigh Nixon why there weren't more women participating in Rotary, she told me that women simply didn't "reach out" to other women in the same way men did.

Nixon also noted that women Rotarians "go low" in organizational leadership, opting for positions as Club Secretary rather than President. Though she surmised that family obligations could well account for leadership hesitancy, Nixon herself is the mother of four and President of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, a position she has held for the past twelve years.

When I note that family obligations didn't keep her from a demanding career and community leadership, she smiled and gestured at a man quietly sitting at the next table.

"I have," she said, "an incredibly supportive husband."

What small business and professional organizations like Rotary Clubs have to offer women – and what they can do to maximize their participation in them – later this week.



## SIMI VALLEY HOSPITAL DONATES MEDICAL EQUIPMENT



Luis Camacho and Victor Garcia help stack mattresses from Simi Valley Hospital on Friday. The mattresses are being sent to a hospital in Honduras.

# Supplies set to help Hondurans

**Beds, gurneys, incubators given**

By Alicia Doyle  
Special to The Star

As a member of the Simi Sunrise Rotary and director of spiritual care services at Simi Valley Hospital, Ron Hrychuk was visiting Honduras last year with fellow Rotarians when they discovered the dire needs at Hospital Escuelas, Tegucigalpa's main hospital.

"We were informed by the medical director that technically they

had the capacity for more than 1,000 beds," said Hrychuk of Simi Valley. "As we toured the facility, it was evident that the needs were enormous, the numbers of people seeking service were huge and working equipment was in extremely short supply."

With that, he spearheaded an effort that has resulted in a generous donation from Simi Valley Hospital to Hospital Escuelas.

"We have 40 fully functional hospital beds, 60 mattresses, 40 tray tables, 11 gurneys, an incubator for babies and some medical supplies including sterile syringes

and surgical gloves," said Hrychuk, who has spent the past year planning and coordinating this effort. "Based on the inventory list prepared for shipping and for customs, the value of this equipment is \$31,400."

To cover the shipping cost of \$4,500, Simi Sunrise Rotary donated \$1,500, and Simi Valley Hospital donated \$3,000.

The medical equipment be-

came available when Simi Valley Hospital opened its new patient care tower.

"In preparation for occupying this new space and upgrading the technology to meet the needs of our patients in the 21st century, new equipment was acquired," Hrychuk said. "But we had a great deal of used medical equipment

See HOSPITAL, 20

Volunteer  
Arvid  
Kraeger  
pushes beds  
from Simi  
Valley Hos-  
pital out to  
the sidewalk  
to load into  
a truck Fri-  
day in Simi  
Valley. The  
beds will  
be sent to a  
hospital in  
Honduras.  
(PHOTO BY AARON  
LAWRENCE FOR THE STAR)



## HOSPITAL from 1B

that we realized could be utilized at another hospital."

The donation has a huge impact on one of the major hospitals in a city where 60 percent of the people live in poverty, said Maggie Kestly, a Simi Sunrise Rotary past president who serves on the board of directors as one of the international service chairs.

"The hospital is only able to treat four people at a time because of the lack of equipment," Kestly said. "With the donation of equipment, these shortages will be addressed and be put to immediate good use to help more people."

Simi Valley Hospital "is a hospital with a heart," Kestly added.

"They are very involved in making the community

in which they are located in a better place, and they are committed to reaching beyond this community out into the world to do the same," Kestly said. "It's a blessing to be part of a community that looks for ways to help others in need," Hrychuk said.

Simi Valley Hospital is an active partner with the Free Clinic of Simi

Valley to meet the needs of people in this community," he said. "Through our work with Rotary, we also seek to reach beyond our country's borders to make a positive difference where we can. This medical equipment provides an opportunity for Simi Valley Hospital and Simi Sunrise Rotary to work together to make a difference

in our world."

Simi Sunrise Rotary has a long relationship with the Rotary Clubs of Honduras, Hrychuk said.

"And we have cooperated on a number of projects over the years and are currently focusing on other needs in Honduras as well as other developing countries around the world," Hrychuk said.

Volunteers load beds from Simi Valley Hospital into a truck Friday in Simi Valley.



Maggie Kestly, president of the Free Clinic of Simi Valley, wipes a tear as she gets up to receive the Woman of the Year award Friday during the Hats Off to Women event at the House of the Brandeis-Bardin campus of the American Jewish University. (PHOTO BY AARON LAWRENCE FOR THE STAR)



# Taking Hats Off to Simi leader

**Fundraiser honors advocate of Free Clinic**

By Joanna Browne  
Special to The Star

A community health care advocate was honored Friday at a fundraiser for Simi Valley Hospital's \$3 million emergency room expansion project.

Maggie Kestly, president of the board of the Free Clinic of Simi Valley, was feted as the 2011 Hats Off to Women honoree during a luncheon hosted by the First Ladies of Simi Valley Hospital Foundation at Brandeis-Bardin campus of the American Jewish University.

The foundation has already raised

\$1.7 million to double the capacity of the emergency room, and the luncheon was expected to net \$60,000 more, said Debi Schulze, foundation president.

"It is so important that Simi Valley has enough health care facilities," Kestly said. "I am so pleased to be a part of making emergency services more accessible."

A Simi Valley resident since 1985, Kestly runs MidValley Properties, a real estate management company. She also is a board member of the Simi Valley Community Foundation and a past president and current board member of the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise.

Nearly 400 guests packed the banquet room to honor Kestly.

"As I stand here and look around this room, I am so humbled. This room is full of incredible women ... and some men," she said.



See HATS, 3B

Kestly gives thanks as she receives the Woman of the Year award Friday during the Simi Valley Hospital Foundation fundraiser.



Adriana Trujillo, an administrator at the Simi Valley Free Clinic, poses on the walk Friday during the fashion show portion of the fundraiser. (PHOTO BY AARON LAWRENCE FOR THE STAR)

## HATS from 1B

Free Clinic Executive Director Fred Baumeister was one of at least five people who nominated Kestly for Woman of the Year, he said.

Kestly's ability to get people to donate time and talent to the clinic is remarkable, he said.

"She has organized the board into several focused work committees, while motivating all on the board to work as a team," Baumeister said.

Kestly has also changed the clinic's fundraising focus by opting for a health and wellness expo as opposed to "just another dinner," he said.

The expo will raise funds for the free clinic while increasing awareness of its work through a free event that promotes healthy life-



Mary Bibb struts down the walk Friday during the Hats Off to Women event.

"It's amazing that someone can be just \$150 short and not be able to take a life-changing course," Vines said.

"Because of this fund, I can say, 'I can help you.'"

The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise has "adopted" the Coppola fund and asked members to make donations once each year to keep it going, Vines said.

Kestly said her Hats Off to Women award is an opportunity to be an example to those who are suffering.

"Finding a way to get outside of ourselves and reach out to others can shift us from depression and make us excited for each new day," she said.

It is set for Oct. 16 at Simi Valley Town Center. Mel Vines, assistant principal of Simi Valley Adult School, also said Kestly deserves the honor. Kestly established the Leonard Coppola Scholarship Fund at the school in honor of her teenage son, who had intended to enroll there before he was killed in 1997.

The fund helps young people get vocational training. It has helped about 90 students with books and fees, he said.



## Horsing around with the Clydesdales

Special-needs kids enjoy majestic meet-and-greet

By Carissa Marsh  
marsh@starline.com

A one-on-one horse brought big smiles to a group of Simi kids last Friday, giving them memories that will last a lifetime.

Besides the grooving tunes and fried cuts, one of the feature attractions at the weekend's 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival was the world-famous Budweiser Clydesdales.

But before the first band hit the stage at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, the Clydesdales had already kept their most important engagement.

The day before the two-day music fest began, special needs children from across Simi got an up-close meeting with the touring team of draft horses known for their power, grace and gentle demeanor.

Simi Valley Unified School District students from kindergarten through high school and adult clients of The Arc of Ventura County were invited to participate in the private meet-and-greet May 27.

About 200 in all attended, said Bill Klepper, chairman of the 2011 festival, which is hosted by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise.

"It was probably one of the highlights of the year for our students and the Success Academy," said Laura Wellington, principal at Hillside Middle School.

The Success Academy is for students with autism. The class with moderately to severely autistic members met the Clydesdales.

"One of our kids is truly afraid of animals, so for him to come up to this large horse and gently pet the horse, it was heartwarming," Wellington said.

For many of the students, it was their first time touching a horse—let alone a Clydesdale. All were enraptured by how it looked and the way it felt.

"His name was Prince," said Mountain View Elementary School student Damien Abbott, 6. "I felt soft. It was white on his feet."

"I was excited to touch it," added Damien's classmate, Gavin Kelley, 7. "I think it was nice."

The boys' teacher, Melissa Harris, who instructs the K-4 day class at Mountain View, said it was "cool" to see her students interacting with the horse, its handler and each other.

"It was interesting because usually they are afraid of things like that, to touch it. And they were engaged and usually they can't keep their focus that long," she said. "They were asking questions about the horse. They were tentative about what the horse's name was and what it can do."

She said the experience built up their social skills, too.

"Being around a huge crowd of people and staying in a group, that's a huge accomplishment," she said.

Like most of the youth at the event, Simi Valley High School



**GENTLE GIANT**—Garden Grove Elementary School third-grader Amanda Vorhies shyly touches the soft, fuzzy nose of 8-year-old Budweiser Clydesdale Prince during a meet-and-greet for Simi Valley special-needs students May 27. Prince, like most of the Budweiser Clydesdales, measures 6 feet high at the shoulders and weighs more than a ton.

student Max Ducker, 16, said he was "happy" and "excited" to touch Prince, not nervous at all. But May's favorite part was "looking at the feathers on his legs." The Clydesdales are recognizable by their feathers, or the long white hairs on their lower legs that cover the hooves.

Mountain View student and animal lover Reece Kennedy—he has five cats, one dog and a desert tortoise named Yak—was also

interested in Prince's feet. "I like his horse shoes, because horse shoes are metal," the 14-year-old said.

Simi High student Jamie Castaneda, who said she has a farm of goats, chickens and rabbits at home, was impressed with the care given the horse and reminded of a pony her family used to have.

"I think they kept them really

—PETER SEI PAGE 12



The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise  
22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
CAJUN & BLUES MUSIC FESTIVAL

### MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND!



**SATURDAY, MAY 28**  
(10:30 AM - 8:00 PM)  
**SUNDAY, MAY 29**  
(10:30 AM - 8:00 PM)

Los Angeles Avenue  
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## Let the good times roll!

**'LET'S JAM'**—Andre Thierry and Zydeco Magic were among several bands that performed at the 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun and Blues Festival on May 28 and 29. The festival was presented by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise, with all proceeds going to charity. See more photos from the event on page 24.



CHERIEA ARCHER/Special to the Star



Cheryl Mosher (left) of Simi Valley dances with Kelly Dennis of Baltimore to the music of Lil' Peckie & The Zydeco Sensations during the second day of the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival on Sunday at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park.

## Harmonious gathering

### ■ Cajun & Blues Festival spices up Simi Valley's menu

By Robyn Flans  
Special to the Star

About 18,000 people converged on Simi Valley Saturday and Sunday for the 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival.

Some came for the music, others came for the food—and there was plenty of all of that.

The festival had three stages for music, which included such acts as Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, Buckwheat Zydeco, Bayou Brothers, John Nemeth, Elvin Bishop and Maria Muldaur.

Most of the cuisine was Cajun-inspired—jambalaya, crawfish, seafood gumbo and fried catfish.

Simi Valley's Andy Anzeccoli, 53, has been coming to the festival for years just for the alligator on a stick.



Barbara Fisher (center) of Los Angeles and friend Michele Gampel of West Hills have their photo taken with the festival alligator mascot.

### FESTIVAL from 3A

"It tastes just like chicken and it's the best," he said. "If you go home from a Cajun festival without eating alligator, you probably should not be here."

"The crawfish is good," said Roy Craig of Simi Valley. "And the music is always good."

Thirteen-year-old Simi Valley resident Kali Moldovan was volunteering taking tickets at the gate, but headed for the wax creation booth during her break.

"You make a formation with your hand and then you dip it in wax," Kali explained. "Then the man

colors it for you in the colors you choose. It's really cool. I did a peace sign."

Victoria Angel, her husband and three kids came from Arizona to visit her parents in Castaic and attend the festival.

"We've been here before and we love the food and the kids have so much fun," Angel said.

"I love the festival. It's low-key, manageable, they have great food, three stages, lots of things for the grandkids. It's fantastic," said Simi Valley's Debbie Diehl. "I'm here with my whole family—stepkids, grandkids, ex-husband, uncles, aunts, you name it."

The arts and crafts tent was full of youngsters

making masks.

Celeste Hart brought her daughter Arianna, 7, from Burbank.

"It's a lot of fun," said Arianna. "There are all these things to put on the mask and then I'm going to be in the parade."

One of the festival's highlights was when eight of the 10 Budweiser Clydesdale horses pranced through the grounds for the guests to photograph, which heralded the Mardi Gras parade.

About 300 joined in the parade along with the Simi Valley High School marching band.

The festival is produced by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise, with all the proceeds going to charity.

Bill Klepper was this year's Cajun and Blues Music Festival Chair. We had a special time on Friday for special needs children and adults to come and see the Budweiser Clydesdales. The weekend saw record breaking numbers!



# Festival revelers get in step with zydeco, blues

Local dancers bring a bit of Louisiana to California

By Robyn Flans  
Special to The Star

Dance instructors Greg Benusa and Al Gibbs were in their element with full dance floors Saturday as they alternated teaching zydeco dance in between the live band performances at the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival.

The festival, which continues today at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, 3005 Los Angeles Ave., showcases performers on two stages, one for Cajun and zydeco and one for blues. Both stages have large dance floors.

"Rock step — slow — quick — quick — slow. Rock step — slow — quick — quick — slow. That was Benusa's simplified lesson in front of the Cajun stage.

See FESTIVAL, 12B



Lynne Goldstein of Carlsbad dances with the festival's crayfish mascot, Sierra Kalinke, at the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival on Saturday. Photo by The Star



Simi Valley's CAJUN & BLUES MUSIC FESTIVAL. Cajun, Zydeco, Blues, and more. MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND



The audience cheers for The 44s as they finished their set on the blues stage at the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival Saturday.

## FESTIVAL from 1B

"You can do turns and stuff, much like swing," Benusa said. "It's more of a folk dance out of Louisiana and Texas than some of the other social dances like West Coast swing and East Coast swing. It came out of the Cajun and creole culture and the wonderful music and dance evolved."

"You can go to New Orleans and find it, but really you need to go west a couple of hours to Lafayette, Mamou, Appalosa and all the small towns where the zydeco and Cajun bands have moved a little faster in his lessons than Benusa.

"But everybody has been having fun and that's what we're here for," she said. "We come here every year and always have a good time."

"I learned a lot and it was a lot of fun. It was very technical so it was a little hard to follow, but after I worked on it for a few minutes, it was great," said dancing newcomer Gladys Citizen from Riverside. "I came here for the zydeco music. That's what the day is about."

Steve and Ava Ricknell came all the way from Culver City to hear the music and thought they'd give the dancing a try.

"We took the early lessons," said Steve Ricknell,

Jack Sramek of Simi Valley sucks the guts out of a crayfish.

to follow. Rose Mary Santiago from Apple Valley said Gibbs moved a little faster in his lessons than Benusa. "But everybody has been having fun and that's what we're here for," she said. "We come here every year and always have a good time."

"I learned a lot and it was a lot of fun. It was very technical so it was a little hard to follow, but after I worked on it for a few minutes, it was great," said dancing newcomer Gladys Citizen from Riverside. "I came here for the zydeco music. That's what the day is about."

Steve and Ava Ricknell came all the way from Culver City to hear the music and thought they'd give the dancing a try. "We took the early lessons," said Steve Ricknell,

65. "I learned where to start and what to do. It was very instructional and my wife and I have been out on the floor practicing."

"We've taken dance lessons before, but not this kind," said Ava, 59. "Greg was so good at teaching it. He made it effortless and we've been out dancing ever since. We think we're good."

The Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival continues from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. today. Tickets are \$18 per day for adults (13 and over) and \$15 for children ages 5 to 12. Kids under 5 are admitted free.

Simi Valley residents are eligible for a \$3 discount for the event.

For more details, including information on free parking, go to <http://www.cajun-blues.com>.

Just after announcing ONE's collaboration with Rotary International and connecting Rotary with ONE at the international conference in New Orleans, I joined thousands of Rotary supporters in Southern California over Memorial Day weekend for their 22nd Annual Cajun Blues and Music Festival at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park.



Three stages of non-stop sound-wielding entertainment of all ages and backgrounds came together to serve their local and global communities. Two dozen ONE members were there to serve Rotary and help raise awareness around the nearly eradicated polio disease and share future opportunities to provide pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines to children around the world. But I couldn't possibly describe the environment better than Beth, a ONE member in Simi Valley.

"What a weekend! As the single mother of three kids 12 and under, surviving the Cajun Festival in Simi Valley is always questionable! This year was no exception, but much more exciting since we had a ONE presence all weekend. And yet how gratifying it was to talk to other parents about ONE and get such amazing feedback! While my boy scout picked up trash throughout the festival (and scored free fried alligator on a stick every once in a while), and my two youngest supervised the little kids on the gigantic bouncers and ate cheeseburgers (they don't 'do' alligator as I was so vehemently informed), I was free to talk to parents about GAVI, immunizations, progress, opportunities in Africa and our American Legacy with helping others pull themselves out of poverty."



CLIMBING ESCAPE—Gabriel Cortes, 14, left, and Kyle Reels, 11, make an escape from King Kong up their rock wall, one of several activities for kids at the festival.



DANCING UP A STORM—Bill Rodgers and Linette Stone have a good time dancing to the music at the festival.

**Cajun Sponsor**  
**Thank You Breakfast**  
More than \$125,000 Raised in Cash and Goods!

We were inundated with questions about what ONE does and why. So many people signed up, lending their own voices to ONE, just because they were shocked that so many global deaths are preventable! As they held their own babies, held the hand of their small child, or watched their teenager sneaking a peak at some cute girl or boy walking by, those parents knew that we in America are so blessed, fortunate and lucky.

There were a few tears as the realization set in that in Simi Valley, Calif., and America, we don't have to worry about death by diarrhea, or pneumonia attacking and killing our children while we sit helplessly by. With all the bumps and bruises that come with being a single mother, I am the luckiest person on the earth. My children are healthy and didn't have to dodge death by diarrhea or pneumonia. Just being born in this country gave them a leg-up. They are alive to pick up trash, supervise bouncers, enjoy fun food while listening to great music on a beautiful sunny California weekend. It's hard not to take that for granted sometimes.

And yet what a great reminder it was to see so many people in Simi Valley commit to giving that same leg-up to all the African mothers. Moms just like us, who should never suffer the loss of a child through preventable illnesses. One shot for a lifetime and their children too can be a little bit safer. As the euphoria of the weekend wears off and the exhaustion sets in I can say that this was, hands down, the best time I have spent in a long time with some of the most wonderful ONE volunteers on the face of the earth. How humbling to realize yet again that where you live should not decide whether you live or whether you die. And ONE member's voices are being heard, resounding through small cities and towns across America, so that no more children die needless deaths. What a privilege it is to serve in this way.

Beth Kalark, Congressional District leader for California's 24th District



After two 12-hour days of volunteering, ONE members woke up early the next morning to help Rotarians clean up Rancho Santa Susana Community Park. ONE members are always finding ways to reach more people through extraordinary events, and spreading the message of America's work of helping others lift themselves out of poverty. Advocating with Simi Sunrise Rotary added an extra-special dimension to the campaign — I'm really looking forward to that collaboration!



FRESHLY COOKED—Kelsey Taylor, 16, serves up delicacies to hungry visitors at one of the numerous food booths at the 22nd annual Simi Valley Cajun and Blues Festival on Sat., May 28. The festival, presented by the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise and continuing on May 29, remains a late-spring staple at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park.



MEETING THE LOCALS—Carlson Lowry, 6, left, Preston Lowry, 5, middle, and older sister, Kelli Lowry, 11, got the chance to hang out with an alligator and a crawfish at the festival.

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## Opinion

### These dads are picture perfect

Fatherhood isn't for everyone. Gone are the days when Dad the breadwinner could come home from work, set down his briefcase, prop up his feet and relax with a newspaper and pipe.

These days, it's a whole new ballgame. A dad in the 21st century has to bring his A-game to the plate. Today's dad must be a chauffeur, handyman, coach, tutor, chef, healer, disciplinarian and banker.

With Mom working full-time, too, Dad has become a jack-of-all-trades who is just as likely to be seen doing the cleaning and grocery shopping as he is changing the oil. Father doesn't always know best, but he has to know a lot. Because of this new paradigm, some might say men have become emasculated. Those people need to get a clue.

This Sun., June 19, show your dad some appreciation. We're sure he deserves it.

What's that? The garbage disposal is broken?

Dad will get right on it—as soon as he finishes making the salad.

The Acorn has had a long tradition of recognizing moms on Mother's Day, so we're not about to ignore the man of the house. Each year, we invite readers, especially the young ones, to use a template in our newspaper and draw a picture of dear old Dad. This year, the responses came in record numbers: See all the daffy drawings on pages 25-32. We've got dads with mustaches, dads with cool hair and dads looking swarthy.

There are smart faces, funny faces, spooky faces and more. You name it, these kids can draw. And you know they love their dads.

In this issue of *The Acorn*, please enjoy our annual Draw Dad tribute.

As you'll see, he's the picture of perfection.



## Letters

### Creole big part of Cajun festival

In response Mark Nelson's letters referring to the Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival, I would like to reference a few points.

We developed this festival and tried not to slight a particular music style or culture but to have a large general public in attendance. Creole is still part of the official logo, "Cajun, Creole, Blues Music and Food," but in certain marketing instances the message has to be shortened, not in an effort to slight a culture, but to get a large general public to attend the festival and to celebrate the cultural roots of the festival.

Sixty percent of the performers on the Cajun-Zydeco stage are from the Creole culture. In addition, a major portion of the food vendors were serving Creole food, and in a large portion of the paid ads, the Creole connection was referenced.

This festival is not a for-profit event but for charity. The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise supports more than 50 charities from the proceeds of this festival and has put back \$1.4 million into the community over the years.

This year, we brought the top act in the Zydeco community, Buckwheat Zydeco, to our festival. He is the 2010 Grammy Award winner. We also had Andre Thierry and Zydeco Magic, and Lil Pookie and the Zydeco Sensations.

We brought Greg Bentusa, one of the top Cajun dance instructors, to our event this year. Our dance floor was packed both days.

We are proud of the fact we had the Budweiser Clydesdales in attendance, and they were a spectacular sight as they drove through the festival.

A further courtesy of Budweiser was when we had more than 200 special needs children and adults come out Friday and visit with the Clydesdales—a truly special moment.

We do not look at this as competition among different styles of music—Cajun, Zydeco and Blues—or culture, but as an opportunity to enhance the overall value of the festival.

We feel we have presented an excellent value to the community. Where else can you go to see such entertainment for as little as \$15 if you are a resident of Simi Valley and, at the same time, know you are contributing to many charitable, educational and humanitarian causes.

Last, you mentioned the "chubby" white guy in your letter. Please note I am in Rotary. There are many "chubby" white guys. Please be more specific.

**William F. Klepper**  
Simi Valley

*Klepper was the chair of the 2011 Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Festival.*

### Writer off base regarding festival

I feel I must respond to Mark Nelson's letter regarding the Cajun & Blues Festival.

First, let me preface this with the fact that I am a past president of the Simi Sunrise Rotary Club.

Rotary has not "removed" Creole from our festival. We simply added Blues to the Cajun Festival. We have donated tens of thousands of dollars to the Creole Heritage Foundation in Louisiana and have been honored by the foundation with awards for our efforts to further the Creole heritage.

Rotary is an organization dedicated to world peace and humanitarian projects. We certainly do not have a reputation of an agenda for racism.

Every dollar from this festival is poured back into our community and a few global projects, with not one person taking a salary. Every person working the festival, with the exception of the musicians, is a volunteer, and paying the musicians again supports the Creole and Blues cultures.

Buying a new sign as you suggest, so we could add the Blues element, would simply have taken several hundred dollars out of the pocket of a local charity.

As for your statement regarding the "less-than-favorable reputation" of Simi Valley, this has no validity. Simi Valley was the location of a racial trial, not a racial act, so I fail to see why or how that flaws our city or its reputation.

The only racial issue I do see is the comment in your letter: "reduced to chubby white gentlemen trying but not succeeding."

I highly recommend you do research and check the facts before voicing negative comments in a public forum about the city of Simi Valley. Rotary and a festival that has raised and donated back to our community more than \$1 million to benefit the needy and less fortunate.

**Lora Simonsgaard**  
Simi Valley

### Editorial Submission Policy

The Simi Valley Acorn welcomes your letters and comments. "Letters to the Editor" should be no longer than 400 words. Hand-written letters are acceptable only if they are legible. Letters must contain the writer's telephone number and address, for verification purposes only. Anonymous letters will not be accepted and no more than one letter per month may be submitted. The deadline to submit a letter for that week's paper is Tuesday at noon. The Simi Valley Acorn reserves the right to accept, reject or edit letters and other editorial material. The Simi Valley Acorn does not return letters, photos or other editorial submissions. Editorial material may be mailed to the Simi Valley Acorn, 30423 Canwood St., Suite 108, Agoura Hills, CA 91301, or faxed to (805) 367-8237. Or e-mail: [simi@theacorn.com](mailto:simi@theacorn.com)

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Lynn Hyllon  
Moni Uhal  
Kerrie Fornaro

**Classified Advertising**  
Elizabeth Lynch  
Mary McCarter

**Receptionist**  
Marilynn Band  
Kim Cummings

### PRODUCTION

**Production Manager**  
Dave McMartin

**Layout and Design**  
Sarah Ely

**Artists**  
Karma Christine Salvato  
Dylan Gunning  
Tim Sinclair  
Andrea Rule

### Deadlines

Friday at 11 a.m.  
Monday at 11 a.m.  
Friday at 11 a.m.  
Monday at 3 p.m.  
Tuesday at 3 p.m.





Stutzman talks to George Kerr at the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise during its weekly meeting Thursday. The club celebrated 25 years of "Service Above Self" the Grand Vista Hotel in Simi Valley.

# Simi Sunrise stars



## Achievements, past presidents, members feted

By Kris Soffey  
Special to The Star

Celebrating 25 years of service to the community of Simi Valley, members of the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise honored past presidents and charter members during Thursday's early morning meeting at the Grand Vista Hotel in Simi Valley.

complishments of the Sunrise Club," said Sal Fasulo, Simi Sunrise's charter president. "I'm now a spectator, but I couldn't enjoy more seeing what this club has accomplished. It's just wonderful."

Fasulo and Paul Miller, former mayor of Simi Valley and a charter member of the club, were named honorary lifetime Rotary Club members by current and outgoing club President Leigh Nixon.

"When you first start with a new group," Miller

## SUNRISE from 1B

said, "you never know how it's going to turn out. After 25 years, this group of people has done a remarkable job serving the community and raising funds."

Nixon then presented a visual history of the club's 25 years of accomplishments and events, including 22 years of Cajun Music Festivals.

"When you look back from what this club started with and what they've grown into, it's just amazing," she said.

From its 25 charter members in 1986 to 129 members today, Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise has raised funds for and organized myriad community programs, from blood drives to free child immunizations.

Along with the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise and Rotary Club of Simi Valley, the Simi Sunrise club funded the



Gil Martinez talks to Leigh Nixon, president of the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise, and Richard Perini as they celebrated at the Grand Vista Hotel in Simi Valley.

"Welcome to Simi Valley" sign and continues to raise money for its maintenance and upkeep. Simi Sunrise also funded the remodeling of the Simi Valley library community room.

Among its ongoing community services are its annual Thanksgiving dinner for seniors at the Simi Valley

Senior Center, feeding the homeless of Simi Valley one evening a month, building and donating bicycles for children during the holidays and providing dictionaries to all Simi Valley third-graders.

"It's a great organization and a good way to give back to the community,"

said Dave McCormick, another charter member. "We've helped a lot of people throughout the community and the world, and we just want to keep the momentum going."

On an international level, Simi Sunrise has provided a computer lab for a school for disabled children in Lima, Peru; helped to provide 10 water tanks to supply clean drinking water to small villages surrounding Dikoya, Sri Lanka; and has helped to provide wheelchairs to disabled individuals living in remote areas in Bangladesh, India, Peru, Iraq, Afghanistan and Zambia.

"Rotary is probably the most misunderstood organization in the world," said Jim Lowry, another Simi Sunrise charter member.

Rotary has 1.2 million members worldwide who are successful businessmen and women that spend their free time doing things for others."



Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise

## The Simi Sunrises

June 2, 2011

## \$16,000 in Scholarships Awarded This Morning



SANTA SUSANA HIGH  
Jonathan Tresner  
Joshua Gray  
Mareise Robinson  
Ariana Stevenson



SIMI VALLEY HIGH  
Cooper Brown  
Angela Ainyvat  
Robert Rosenberg



ROYAL HIGH  
Nicolas Gervasoni  
Cassandra Mann



GRACE BRETHREN HIGH  
Brianne Schwabauer  
Zechariah Hogan  
Jesse Buel  
Rebecca Lepore



ADULT SCHOOL  
Hector Jimenez-Vela  
APOLLO HIGH  
Camille DeMott  
Mako Steiner



Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise  
Simi Valley, CA 93063

April 30, 2011

Dear President Leigh Nixon,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend RYLA. Before I made the decision to come to RYLA, I must admit, I was afraid, because for one, I have never been to camp before, and secondly, when I meet new people, I am typically very shy. However, this retreat really opened my eyes with new ways to face my problems. I learned how to take charge of my life, because if I set my own goals and make my own decisions, I can pilot my own life. I feel more confident now, and I made some great new friends! Rotary is amazing for providing such a wonderful experience for an elite group of like-minded students. I am truly grateful. This experience will always spark my memory of such a great time. If you are interested in hearing more about my experience at RYLA, I could come to a Rotary meeting! I am already exciting my little sister about attending RYLA when she gets to high school!

Sincerely,  
*Mehak Sachdev*

Mehak Sachdev



4/30/11

Dear  
Leigh Nixon,

I would just like to start off with saying thank you, for the opportunity you gave me ~~now~~ by sponsoring me to be able to come. This retreat has truly changed my life more than I thought was possible. I was able to overcome stage fright as well as being social and just meeting new interesting people. I will remember this retreat for the rest of my life and try and apply each topic that was discussed to my everyday life to become more of a leader to my community. I feel so fortunate that I was chosen for this, so many other people could have been selected for this life changing event, and I just thank you again.

Thank you  
Candice Ortiz,

April 30th 2011

Dear Leigh,

I thank you sincerely from the deep of my heart for the opportunity you gave me to participate in Ryla. I heard how amazing and life changing it was, now it's gonna be me telling everybody how in each of us there is a potential leader. The choices we make are gonna influence our future, they are gonna get closer to our goal, we have to be able to make the right ones.

I've been really into it, I received a lot and I'm ready to give back. The group I was in honored me asking me if they wanted to be their leader. Tomorrow I'm gonna represent their voices in the closing ceremony. You Leigh, giving me this chance to participate, helped me find my path, you changed my life in the better way. Thank you,

Camiille Pagmarco

Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise  
Simi Valley, CA, 93063

April 29, 2011

Dear Leigh Nixon

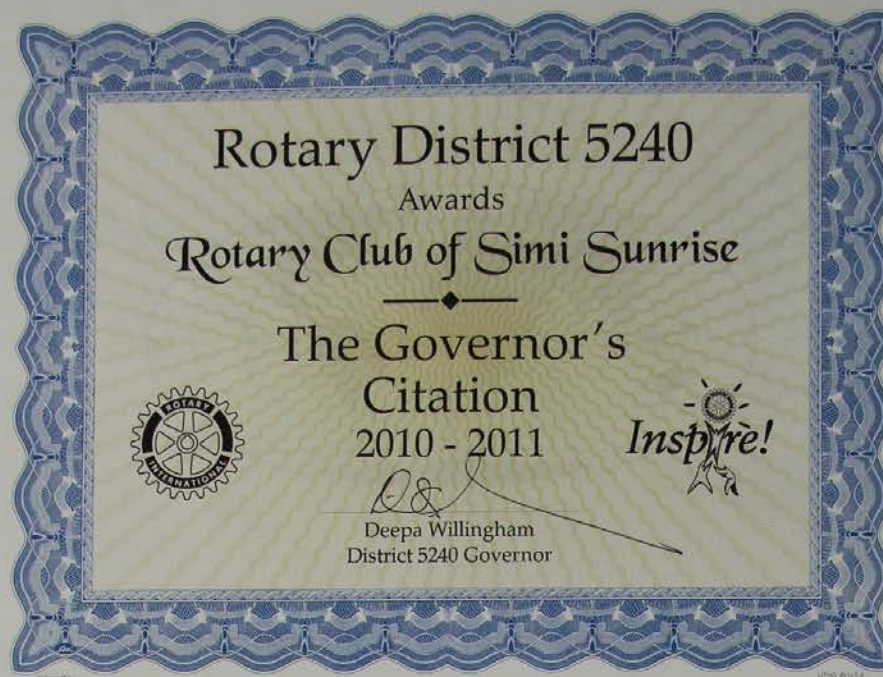
Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend the 2011 RYLA retreat. It was a great experience and I learned so many new leadership skills. I learned to stay determined and never give up. I will take these skills and cherish them.

The Rotary Club is an amazing non-profit service organization. Thank you so much for sponsoring me to attend. I learned so much and met many great new friends. We learned to socialize and not be afraid to be open and speak your mind. The speakers were so positive and spoke of their success which influenced us to want to do more.

Once again this was an amazing experience and thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to attend.

Sincerely,  
Sophie Klepper









# **The Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise, 2010-2011- President: Leigh Nixon**

The theme for the Rotary Club of Simi Sunrise 2010-2011 was "Coloring Out-side the Lines." We wanted our members to think non-traditionally about our programs, events and activities this year, and... they colored all over the place!

My goal was to enhance Vocational Service, which in the past was an avenue of service that has been the least known in our club. In the spirit of Paul Harris, we started an activity each week called the "Vocational Visit." A member's name is drawn and he/she gives a 30 second commercial about their vocation and then the members are invited to stop by during the week to visit the Rotarian at work and leave their card. Paul Harris and members originally had their meetings where they "rotated" to each other's place of business which hence the name "Rotary" was named for. At the end of the year, we will draw a name from all the cards collected and the winner will receive a PHF for rotating to other Rotarian's place of business in the spirit of Paul Harris.

We grew our club this year with a net 8 members. We sent more than \$65,000 to the Rotary Foundation and we are now a 100% PHF Club for the first time. We are in the midst of our ever popular Cajun & Blues Festival which takes every club member's participation and it promises a spectacular and busy event with new blues entertainment and the Clydesdale horses.

Highlights also included our wonderful Exchange Student, Camille! She was a delight! We did lots of community services projects and international service projects as well as the vocational visits. The highlight of Club service was something we had not done in a long time- craft talks from our members- we called it: A day in the life of a Rotarian at work. They have been wonderful!!

## **2010-2011 Board of Directors:**

President: Leigh Nixon  
 Past President: Tim Shannon  
 President-Elect: Herschel Berger  
 Secretary- Ernie Gilbert  
 Treasurer- Mike McCaffrey  
 Club Service Director: Cindy Jacoby  
 International Service Directors: Maggie Kestly and Scott Blough  
 Community Service Directors: Steve Johnson and Arvid Krueger  
 Vocational Service Director: Mike Alterman  
 New Generations Director: Jarrod DeGonia  
 Family of Rotary: Monica Berlin and Savi Bhim  
 The Rotary Foundation Directors: Pat Abuzzese and Heather Frankle  
 Directors at Large: BJ Anderson, Gary Stewart, Craig Foster  
 Cajun & Blues Chair: Bill Klepper  
 Water Concerns- Tom Marsh  
 Health Concerns:  
 Michelle Foster







FUN

together



Thank You!



IF YOU CAN  
IMAGINE  
IT, YOU CAN  
ACHIEVE  
IT. IF YOU CAN  
DREAM  
IT, YOU CAN  
REALIZE IT.

